

MADISON COUNTY
FY2020 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) Grant Opportunity
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Request for Information from Potential Broadband Partners

Madison County requests information from qualified internet service providers who desire willing to be a partner on the submission of application(s) for 2020 DHCD Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Grant funding. The County will accept responses until 2:00PM EST on July 12, 2019, in the Madison County Administration office located at 302 Thrift Road, Madison, Virginia 22727. Information on this opportunity is available at www.madisonco.virginia.gov.

INQUIRIES: Any questions which may arise as a result of this Request for Information (RFI) may be addressed to Tracey Gardner, Director of Tourism and Economic Development, at tgardner@madisonco.virginia.gov. Contact initiated by an offeror concerning this RFI with any other County representative, not expressly authorized elsewhere in this document, is prohibited. Any such unauthorized contact may result in disqualification of the offeror from this transaction.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Complete Legal Name of Firm: _____

Address: _____

Federal Tax ID Number:_____

Signature of Authorized Representative: _____

Typed Name & Title: _____

Primary contact person for questions relative to this project:

Contact Name & Title: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail _____

The respondent has the sole responsibility to identify and describe the services it proposes. Respondents should take into account that not only the content but also the form and clarity of their response. If the County cannot determine what is being proposed, it is likely to reject the response. All information should be submitted in an organized, easy-to-understand manner. The right is reserved, as the interest of the County requires, to revise this document prior to the due date and postpone the due date. Such revisions will be announced by written addenda. The County will reject proposals received after the date and time of closing and return them to the offeror unopened. Timely submission of proposals is the sole responsibility of the respondent. Madison County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive informalities, and to negotiate with the successful respondent(s). If the County closes its offices due to inclement weather scheduled receipt of responses will be extended to the next business day, same time.

RETURN THIS PAGE WITH RESPONSE

I. PURPOSE

Madison County is seeking one (1) or more Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to partner with for the submission of one (1) or more applications for the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Grant opportunity for FY2020. Responses to this Request for Information are due by the date and item indicated on the cover page. VATI Guidelines are expected to be published on or about July 1, 2019. All VATI applications are due by 11:59 P.M. on September 3, 2019. For more information on VATI, please visit the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) website:

<https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/virginia-telecommunication-initiative-vati> for complete information regarding VATI, including details on how to apply for the funding.

II. BACKGROUND

Madison County is located in Central Virginia at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The County serves an area of 327 square miles with a population of approximately 13,200.

Madison County is served in varying degrees by broadband service, with some areas of the County having limited or no broadband availability. Areas along U.S. Route 29 are more likely to have service provided from incumbent providers using cable, coaxial, DSL, or wireless solutions. The Madison County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2018, includes the promotion of "County-wide availability of affordable and accessible high-speed internet service ... through private providers" as a goal for the County.

A library of information regarding the County's past efforts in supporting broadband can be found at <https://www.madisonco.virginia.gov/economicdevelopment/page/broadband>.

Madison County intends to partner with one (1) or more private sector broadband service providers to obtain grant funds through the VATI program. VATI has received approximately \$19 million for FY2020 intended to be offered to eligible applicants to provide last-mile broadband services to unserved areas of the state. The VATI program intends to fund broadband infrastructure deployment in partnership with private sector broadband service providers to ensure that unserved areas of the state have access to broadband speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3Mbps upload. Unserved areas are defined as having 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload or less. VATI anticipates releasing FY2020 Grant Guidelines on or about July 1, 2019. Any successful respondent who works with County must adhere to *all* VATI grant guidelines.

The provider shall be responsible for securing rights to any tower sites and assume all other risks associated with the project, construction and system operation.

III. Requested Information:

Through this RFI, eligible private sector broadband service providers are encouraged to submit one (1) or more VATI Broadband Project Proposals (VBPP) which may potentially be included in the County's application(s) for VATI funding. Responses should be complete, and any element omitted may be cause for a "non-responsive" determination. Each project and response must contain:

1. FCC Form 477 or equivalent
2. Summary of current services provided and locations your organization currently serves including the number of years in the telecom industry.
3. Take Rate, Adoption, and Affordability Metrics (tiers of service including range of cost).
4. Map of proposed service area with notation of potential customers (residential and commercial)
 - a. Maps must show physical address and street names
 - b. Printed map, and an ESRI file map on a jump drive (ESRI preferred, KMZ or KML also

- accepted)
- 5. Statement of eligibility
- 6. How area proposed is eligible for VATI funding per DHCD guidelines
- 7. Documentation that proposed project area is unserved based on VATI criteria.
- 8. Status of contracts within the proposed service area
 - a. Have the residents/businesses in the area expressed interest in improved broadband?
- 9. Technology Proposed for the VBPP
 - a. Wireless, Fiber, etc.
 - b. Proposed speed of the network
 - c. Type of equipment to be installed for the VBPP
 - d. Proposed service speeds to customers
 - e. Speed of the "backbone" network
- 10. Type of VBPP Proposed Cost Model
 - a. Estimated total cost of the project
 - b. Estimated cost to be reimbursed by VATI
- 11. VBPP Partnership Model
 - a. Proposed partnership agreement
 - i. VATI requires that the submitting locality "partner" with a private sector broadband service provider as part of the application. What is your recommendation for the partnership agreement?
 - b. Proposed County Support
 - i. What types and level(s) of support will you require from the County
 - 1. Demand Aggregation Support (surveying County residents to create demand for the improved broadband service).
 - 2. Permitting Support (VDOT and others contact and permit processing)
 - 3. Other
- 12. VBPP Schedule
 - a. State preparedness to complete the work i.
 - Who will be working on the project
 - ii. Availability of equipment and materials required to complete the work
- 13. Project Schedule
 - a. Major Milestones and Project Plan
- 14. Clear articulation of what is proposed so that it can be properly evaluated against possible interference with the Madison County IT network (internet and telephone systems) and current and future public radio systems. Such information is expected to include the specifics of the type/make/mode, power, quantity and location, weight, orientation, frequencies, and other relevant information pertaining to the installation of new broadband service antenna.
- 15. Clear documentation that the proposer has the right to install antennae where needed.
- 16. Articulation of capacity and agreement to complete a project within twelve (12) months of VATI award contract execution.

IV. Desired Outcome

The desired outcome is a partnership with one (1) or more private sector broadband service providers to effectively submit application(s) for VATI funding. The County reserves the right to partner with more than one (1) ISP in this VATI effort or to determine that there are no suitable partners for an application to the VATI program.

Respondents are advised that all resultant contracts will be extended, with the authorization of the Respondent, to other Political Subdivisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia to permit their ordering of supplies and/or services at the prices and terms of the resulting contract. If any other jurisdiction decides to use the final contract, the Contractor must deal directly with that jurisdiction or political subdivision concerning the placement or orders, issuance of the purchase order, contractual disputes, invoicing and

payment. Owner acts only as the “Contracting Agent” for these jurisdictions and political subdivisions. Failure to extend a contract to any jurisdiction will have no effect on consideration of a response/bid/proposal.

- a. It is the awarded vendor’s responsibility to notify the jurisdictions and political subdivision of the availability of the contract.
- b. Each participating political subdivision has the option of executing a separate contract with the awardee. Contracts entered into with them may contain general terms and conditions unique to those jurisdictions and political subdivisions covering minority participation, non-discrimination. If, when preparing such a contract, the general terms and conditions of a jurisdiction are unacceptable to the awardee, the awardee may withdraw its extension of the award to that jurisdiction.
- c. Madison County shall not be held liable for any costs or damage incurred by another jurisdiction as a result of any award extended to that jurisdiction or political subdivision by the awardee.

V. Submissions

Madison County requests that interested companies, consultants and persons with expertise in the areas outlined above submit information regarding creative ideas, recommended approaches, strategies, advice and the like. Madison County seeks input in any form deemed appropriate by the respondent, including but not limited to white papers, lessons learned, etc.

VI. Timeline

Responses to this RFI are due by the date and time indicated on the cover page.

All submissions are to include (a) one (1) original and seven (7) printed copies and (b) one digital copy in a single pdf file with the exception of any map file submitted on a jump drive (ESRI preferred, KMZ or KML also accepted). Late response shall not be accepted. Responses should be submitted in writing and clearly labeled “RFI FY 2020 VATI Broadband Partner” to:

Jack Hobbs, County Administrator
Madison County
302 Thrift Road
Madison, VA 22727

VII. Disclaimer:

Be advised. This is a request for information ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes-it does not constitute a request for proposal or a promise to issue an RFP or IFB in the future.

This RFI does not commit the Madison County Board of Supervisors to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Furthermore, Madison County is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Parties responding are advised that Madison County will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party’s expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP or IFB, if any is issued. Any materials submitted in response to this RFI shall be the sole property of Madison County.